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Snapdragon Rust

Snapdragon rust *(Puccinia antirrhini)* is apparently an American disease, having been first found in California in 1895. Since that time, it has spread all over the United States, by means of infected snapdragon plants, shipped from place to place.

The disease attacks all portions of the plants—leaves, branches, stems and even the seed pods and all varieties are equally susceptible.

It is spread from plant to plant by its spores which are readily carried by air currents and these spores can also be carried on the soil from one crop to the next. It is not borne on the seed, so that rust free seedlings can be raised if clean soil is used and there is no nearby source of contamination.

Prevention and Control

Rust can be largely prevented from spreading in greenhouses by watering so as to avoid wetting the plants. Water is necessary for spore germination and infection cannot take place if the leaves are kept dry.

Spraying with copper fungicides was formerly recommended, but appears to be of doubtful value. Recent experiments at New Hampshire Agriculture Experiment Station indicates that sulfur dust is better than anything yet tried.

From a knowledge of the incubation period of the rust, and from tests, it is found that if the badly diseased plants are removed and the remainder carefully covered with sulfur dust and kept for 12 hours each day at a temperature of 72 degrees F. for three days, good control can be obtained. As a further precaution it is recommended that upon reappearance of rust spots, the foregoing procedure be repeated. As the incubation period varies from 17 days at 55 degrees F. to 9 days at 70 degrees F., and as normal temperature for this plant is around 50 degrees F., sulfuring will ordinarily not be needed at shorter intervals than 17-20 days.